

The opinion in support of the decision being entered today was not written for publication and is not binding precedent of the Board.

Paper No. 20

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS  
AND INTERFERENCES

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Ex parte SCOTT K. MICKIEVICZ,  
DAVID W. HELSTER, GEORGE R. DEFIBAUGH  
and  
LYNN ROBERT SIPE

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Appeal No. 2003-1232  
Application No. 09/498,268

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ON BRIEF

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Before THOMAS, FLEMING and GROSS, Administrative Patent Judges.

THOMAS, Administrative Patent Judge.

DECISION ON APPEAL

Appellants have appealed to the Board from the examiner's final rejection of claims 1 through 6. The examiner has allowed claim 8, but has objected to claim 7.

Representative claim 1 is reproduced below:

An electrical connector comprising:

a common housing having grooves, circuit boards carried by the housing, the circuit boards having edges that are disposed in the grooves, the circuit boards extending parallel to each other in spaced-apart relationship, each of the circuit boards including a substrate and conductive tracks integrally formed on the substrate, the conductive tracks providing electrical paths through the connector, the electrical paths extending from a mating interface at one end of the connector to a mounting interface at another end of the connector.

The following reference is relied on by the examiner:

Paagman

6,083,047

July 4, 2000  
(filed Jan. 16, 1997)

Claims 1 through 3 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Paagman.

Claims 4 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103. As evidence of obviousness, the examiner relies upon Paagman alone.

Rather than repeat the positions of the appellants and the examiner, reference is made to the Brief (no reply brief has been filed) and to the Answer for the respective positions thereof.

#### OPINION

We sustain both stated rejections of the claims on appeal. As noted at page 3 of the Brief, claims 1 through 6 stand together. We note also that no arguments are presented in the argument

portion of the Brief as to any claim other than independent claim 1 on appeal. Therefore, we confine our remarks to representative independent claim 1 on appeal as do both parties.

We sustain the rejections for the reasons set forth by the examiner as outlined briefly in the statement of the rejections at page 3 of the Answer and embellished upon in the examiner's responsive arguments at page 4. We are not persuaded that appellants' arguments at pages 3 through 5 of the Brief present persuasive arguments that distinguish the subject matter of representative independent claim 1 on appeal over the teachings and showings as argued by the examiner as to Paagman.

The initial showing of various portions of figure 1 of Paagman does not include the claim requirement of the common housing having grooves. On the other hand, the examiner correctly points out that the showing in various portions of figure 10 does show a connector housing 70 having respective top grooves 73 and shorter bottom grooves 77.

The printed circuit board assembly 1 in the various showings in figure 1 takes various forms such as the printed circuit board module 30 in figure 2 comprising individual printed circuit boards 31. Various portions of Paagman consider printed circuit board 31 also as a substrate material. In any event, appellants' own specification relies upon the prior art's knowledge of what comprises a printed circuit board having a substrate and various conductive tracks thereon as noted at page 4 of the specification as filed.

Of interest is the printed circuit assembly in figure 2 as shown in the various portions of figure 6 as comprising an insulative cover 56. As discussed beginning at the bottom of column 5

through column 8 in Paagman, the cover 56 includes upper locating and mounting ribs 65 in the form of dovetail ribs as well as shorter mounting and locating ribs 66 on its bottom. Since the cover contains this claimed circuit board as well as the respective ribs attached thereto, the cover 56 is considered by the examiner to comprise the claimed circuit boards with their respective grooves allowing them to mate with the grooves of the housing. Figure 7, as well, shows an assembled terminal module formed of a printed circuit board assembly as in figure 2, including the cover shown in figure 6. The showings in figure 7 include the upper locating mounting rib 65 as well as the lower mounting rib 66 in addition to the substrate/printed circuit board 31 and the corresponding printed circuit board module 30 in its entirety mounted within the cover 56. Additionally, it is very clearly shown here that contact terminals 34 provide a mating interface for the various shown electrical pads, where the contact terminals 34 are located at one end of the connector which are connected to the mounting interface of the claim, that is, the connector mounting terminals 35/37 at the other end of the connector. Figure 9 is also illustrative.

Connector housing 70 in the various portions of figure 7 comprises grooves 73, 77 as indicated earlier. Various circuit board modules/assemblies 30 are presented in mirror image form in figure 12 along the narrow image line L as a part of the cover 56. Figure 15, for example, shows the completed arrangement in an apparent end view format where the dovetail ribs 65, 65 ' meet the grooves 73, 77 of the housing 70.

It appears clear to us that the printed circuit module assembly 30/cover 56 comprises the printed circuit boards of the claims on appeal in accordance with the examiner's arguments. Plural of these elements extend in a parallel manner to each other in spaced apart relationship when placed within the housing 70, as claimed.

Appellants' arguments are not persuasive that the cover 56/circuit board assembly 30 in Paagman do not comprise the claimed circuit boards. Clearly, this position is misplaced since they clearly are taught and shown in Paagman to comprise or include printed circuit boards per se. We therefore agree with the examiner's views expressed at page 4 of the answer that the cover is not necessarily to be considered to be separate apart from the printed circuit boards therein themselves. Appellants' claim limitations in claim 1 do not otherwise exclude the examiner's interpretation of what a circuit board may comprise, or present any arguments that the artisan will not so consider them consistent with the examiner's views. As noted by the examiner at the bottom of page 4 of the Answer, "Applicant has not indicated any claimed limitations that are not met by Paagman."

In view of the foregoing, the decision of the examiner rejecting various claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 35 U.S.C. § 103 is affirmed.

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No time period for taking any subsequent action in connection with this appeal may be extended under 37 CFR § 1.136(a).

AFFIRMED

JAMES D. THOMAS  
Administrative Patent Judge

MICHAEL R. FLEMING  
Administrative Patent Judge

ANITA PELLMAN GROSS  
Administrative Patent Judge

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